



Garden City Runners News Release

21 July 2024

GCR ladies take Gold at Fairlands Valley 3km Relays

Club fields line-ups right across the ability range



GCR enjoyed a successful outing at this year's Fairlands Valley 3K, fielding many teams and coming away with medals. As GCR chairman, **Sean Bowen** reports the the relays provide a great end to the summer racing season—and demonstrate the club's inclusive policy.

"With a total of 21 teams running 84 legs, GCR fielded the biggest turnout of all the clubs," he notes. Captains **James Huish** and **Hannah Frank** did a tremendous job of assembling the line-ups and making late tweaks — with some runners impacted by train strikes on the day. After a few wet days, we were blessed with a perfect dry summer evening."

The GCR teams represented the wide range of pace across the club. At the front, GCR fielded full-strength men's and women's quartets. **Juliet Vine, Jessica Timmins, Martha Hall and Zoe Stephens**, with a combined time of 46:58, won gold as the fastest women's team overall. All four beat the magic 12 minutes, and Zoe crossed the line a minute ahead of runners-up Royston. Juliet's 11:17 made her the fourth fastest woman.



Meanwhile, Team GCR 1 — **Bradley Birch, Ben Carr, Chris Baylis** and **Joe Ansbro** — won bronze as the third fastest men's team. Summarising this success, Sean Bowen says, "With a total time of 39:41, Joe finished a minute behind second placed St Albans and the awesome young Luton AC team. Bradley's 9:24 was the fifth fastest time of the night."

At the other end of the field, the GCR 'H' team of **Hayley Connolly, Willow Gibson, Tandy St Francis** and **Val Levison** were the last finishers in 1:18:41, just four seconds adrift of hosts Fairlands Valley Spartans, and with plenty of GCR clubmates sticking around to see them safely home. Willow said, "It was a fantastic race, and very inclusive for all runners, including slow ones like me."

For the first time in its 35-year history, the relay introduced electronic timing, thanks to GCR's **Richard Sidlin** of RacesOnline — ably assisted by **Andrew Ackrill**. "The system worked beautifully," reports Sean, "with results displayed on the big screen for runners to watch before the presentation. After the usual minor corrections, they were up on the website with lots of viewing options and filters. Could this be the end of the multitudes of frayed-nerve volunteers with stop-watches, pens and paper?"

Summing up his approach to team selection, Sean concluded, "I decided to put together a mixed team, as I felt it would give **Alex Malzer, Alex Faulkner, Beata Macienko-Marszalek** and myself the chance to run competitively without the pressure to justify our place in one of the men's or women's teams. When you see the line-ups of some of the teams ahead of us, it's clear that some other clubs are prioritising their mixed teams as their best chance of winning medals. Perhaps this gives us something to work on going forward."

All in all, GCR achieved five medals in the Open race, and 11 County medals, including a podium place in almost every County Vet category. The full GCR turn-out was as follows:

1st Senior Female – Julie Vine, Jessica Timmins, Martha Hall, Zoe Stephens

3rd Senior Male – Bradley Birch, Benj Carr, Chris Baylis, Joe Ansbro

3rd Vets Female – Rachel Hickey, Veronica Shadbolt, Julia Wiper, Helen Stafford

2nd Vets Male - Bruce Judge, Peter Harvey, Paul Guy, Simon Bostock

In the Herts County Champs (fastest four men, fastest three women, regardless of team):

1st Herts Sen – Julie Vine, Jessica Timmins, Martha Hall

2nd Herts Sen – Bradley Birch, Benj Carr, Danny Figg, Chris Baylis

1st Herts Vets – Julie Vine, Martha Hall, Zoe Stephens

3rd Herts Vets – Bruce Judge, Peter Harvey, Paul Guy, Chris Dungate

Full results [here](#)

Fairlands Valley Challenge

Still at Fairlands Valley, a group of hardy GCRs took on the Fairlands Valley Challenge on Sunday. **Rebecca Barden** ran the 18.6 mile route with **Steve Ellerd-Elliott**, **Roger Adey** and **Helen Stafford**, joined for the first five miles by **Hannah Frank** who ran the half marathon distance, and by **Colin Grace** from Datchworth onwards. She reports that the event is not quite as demanding from a navigational point of view as in the days before GPX



maps, when runners had only a complicated set of written instructions to guide them, but even so there were still challenges for our plucky quintet, not least following the route through a field of maize plants which were taller than the shorter members of the group. "The weather was perfect for a run in the beautiful Herts countryside, and runners were well looked after at checkpoints along the course, providing cold drinks, squares of the famous

Fairlands Valley Spartans' bread pudding, and even ice pops at the Datchworth stop. The team even managed to find their way out of Fairlands Valley Park by turning right *at the correct bin*. This is something that has confounded Rebecca on several other attempts. She

credits Spartans for another brilliantly-organised event with great support (and catering).
Photos of her team (including the route through the 9ft high corn field) are pictured below.



Maverick Adidas Terrex Chilterns Ultra

Martin Mitchell (*pictured left*) participated in the 50k Ultra at Princes Risborough on Saturday. He reports, "It was a well organised event that looped through the scenic Chilterns. The weather was muggy with lots of hills and some sections were a bit overgrown which resulted in a few minor cuts from brambles, but it was worth it for the views. I missed a turn at 38k which cost me a few places, but I was happy with 16th place and a time of 4:54 minutes. I would highly recommend this event to anyone wanting to do an Ultra."

Centenary Route 20.20km GCR Challenge

GCR's Centenary Route Challenge, circumnavigating Welwyn Garden City clockwise, takes place on August 4th. The event is an Avery scorer including for volunteers.

The club is seeking volunteers at the start and finish to be the timekeeper and recorder of results. There is also an opportunity for a couple of people to man the water station at Tewinbury Farm.

Contact: peterharveyone@gmail.com for details.

For those intending to run the start times are as follows:

9.00am for those over 3 hours

9.15am for 2½ to 3 hours

9.30am for 2¼ to 2½ hours

9.45am for 2 to 2¼ hours

10.00am 1¾ to 2 hours

10.15am faster than 1¾ hours

There is no need to pre-enter, simply choose your group on the day. Arrive in plenty of time to collect a number.

Start and finish are at the end of the sailing lake near the railway bridge at Stanborough Park. There is parking at the park for a fee and surface streets are within a kilometre at Stanborough Green and the B197.

The route is marked with orange signs but it is advisable to run with someone who knows where to go. A map of the route with course profile and a GPX file are enclosed, and here is a useful link: <https://connect.garmin.com/modern/course/288988708>

Take care at junctions. The event is not a race, although your time will be published.

All finishers will receive a medal.

Any questions email Race Director Richard.Somerset@ntlworld.com

The Big Half

Michael Scutt reminds GCRs that the Big Half is taking place again in London on 1st September 1st, and, as in previous years, GCR has been asked to supply a team of 20 volunteers for reuniting runners with their bags in Greenwich near the finish.

"It's good fun and a great chance to meet with other club members and generate some team spirit," he says. "It is hard work but very rewarding and you get a good view of the runners as they come into the finish.

Transport is provided both ways and a packed lunch. Kit is provided unless the volunteer has previously participated.

Michael has now taken over responsibility for co-ordinating both this event, and the London Marathon, from Louise Smith. Anyone interested in helping should notify by email to michaelscutt@me.com. It's first come first served—and anyone applying after the 20 volunteers cap has been reached will be added to a reserve list.

St. Albans Summer 10K

Four GCRs took part in the super-flat St. Albans Summer 10K race including **Richard Brown**, (as first GCR home in 56:13). Others included **Lee Wood** 56:55; **Carol Reid** 59:00 (2nd in age grade), and **Helen Church** 1:10:25.

Garden City Walkers

A group of GCRs (and friends) undertook its latest 7-mile circular trail jaunt from Benington to Walkern, in the company of plenty of livestock (*also navigating the path through the 9ft high maize field referred to by Rebecca earlier*). For many it was a diversion from the previous day's parkrun, in glorious weather. Pictured are the group outside the Walkern Hall Georgian manor house.



parkrun Roundup

More than 100 GCRs were out and about at weekend parkruns far and wide, enjoying the glorious weather. **Thomas Buzzard** judged his finish to perfection at Bedford finishing 12th in a psychologically brilliant 19:59, while **Jess Buzzard** finished in 27:23. Just outside the sub 20 minutes was **Nigel Cavill** who nevertheless PB'd in 20:15 at Rickmansworth, while close behind was **Neil Brittain** in 20:35. Elsewhere, **Andy Morgan** PB'd at Whitstable in 22:00 to finish 20th, while **Jamie Thomas Rose** (20:33) and **Daniel van de Walt** (20:52) were GCR's star runners at Stevenage. **Chris Baylis** narrowly missed taking top spot at

Panshanger, finishing 14 seconds behind the winner in 18:46,. Behind him, **Daniel Pudner** finished 7th (in 20:13), with **Justin Hill** and **Rob Casserley** finishing in 21:02 and 21:04 respectively. Star of the week though was unquestionably **Rob Cartwright**, with yet another fantastic PB (in 23:54). What are you putting in your breakfast cereal, Rob?

Full results for GCRs participating in Saturday's parkruns can be found [here](#).

Club Championships 2024

The Club Championships principally consist of races open to the public, although other races may be included as long as they are not hosted by Garden City Runners. The races are ideally chosen from the Avery calendar; however, Race Committee may express flexibility including prestigious events and those facilitating Hertfordshire County Championships. parkruns may be included and should be local.

For 2024 the Championship races are:

Race #	Event	Date
1	Fred Hughes 10	21 st January
2	Watford Half	4 th February
3	Panshanger parkrun	9 th March
4	Flitwick 10k	14 th April
5	St Albans Half	9 th June
6	FVS 3k Relay	18 th July
7	Stevenage 10k	15 th September
8	ATW Hatfield 5	24 th November

GCR Avery League 2024

The GCR Race Committee has produced the calendar of races for the Avery League Competition and the Club Championships. Details on all of the 2024 races are below, and these will also be published on the GCR website as soon as possible, and on the GCR Facebook group. Please note that the Avery Rules have been simplified by removing the Tiebreaker - in future, joint winners will share the trophy. Happy Racing!

Avery Event #	Date	Event	Venue	Cost <i>Registration fees may apply</i>	Status / Notes
1	21 st January	Fred Hughes 10	St Albans	£20.00 aff.	Completed
2	4 th February	Watford Half	Watford	£31.00 aff.	Completed

3	*cancelled*	SXCL Royston (Race #5 of 2023-2024 season)	Therfield Heath,	Free	--
4 (V)	9 th March	Panshanger parkrun	Panshanger Park	Free	Completed
5	24 th March	Run Fest at Lee Valley (choice of Half or 10k)	Lee Valley Water Park, Waltham Cross	10k: £26.00 aff. Half: £34.00 aff.	Completed
6	14 th April	Flitwick 10k	Flitwick	£18.00 aff.	Completed
7	6 th May	Kimpton Fun Run 10k	Kimpton	£10.00	Completed
8	15 th May	MWRRL #1	Stevenage	Free	Completed
9	23 rd May	MWRRL #2	Ware	Free	Completed
10	New date 4 th June	MWRRL #3	Royston	Free	Completed
11	27 th June	MWRRL #4	Trent Park	Free	Completed
12 (V)	30 th June	Welwyn 10k	Panshanger Park	£20.00	Completed
13 (V)	10 th July	MWRRL Mob Match	Ridgeway Academy, WGC	Free	Completed
14	18 th July	FVS 3k Relays	Fairlands Valley, Stevenage	Free	Completed
15 (V)	4 th August	GCR Centenary 20.2k	WGC Centenary Route	Free	Club will send out details via email
16 (V)	4 th September	Hatfield 5k #2 (Vets)	Hatfield	tbc	Details tbc
17	15 th September	Stevenage 10k	Stevenage	£18.00 aff.	Register here
18a	22 nd September (provisional date)	SXCL #1	Royston	Free	Club will send out details via email
18b (V)	13 th October (provisional date)	SXCL #2	Cheshunt	Free	Club will send out details via email
19	20 th October	Stevenage Half Marathon & Marathon	Stevenage	tbc	Register here
20	27 th October (provisional date)	SXCL #3	Cassiobury Park, Watford	Free	Club will send out details via email
21	3 rd November (provisional date)	SXCL #4	Trent Park	Free	Club will send out details via email
22	24 th November	Hatfield 5	Hatfield	£22.00 early-bird aff.	Register here

23 (V)	Early December (tbc)	Festive 5	WGC	tbc	Club will send out details via email
24	15 December (provisional date)	SXCL #5	Stevenage	Free	Club will send out details via email

Group Runs - Tuesdays 6.20pm for 6.30pm start, Dance Studio Ridgeway Academy

The group runs are planned to take approximately an hour, the following table gives an idea of the pace. To give variety, especially in the summer, distances will vary a little.

Group/Distance	Pace (mins/km)	Pace (mins/mile)
5k social	A gentle-paced run that would suit those who are still new to running, like a slower pace, are returning from injury or a break from running	
7k	7:30 – 8	12 – 13
8k	7 – 7:30	11 – 12
9k	6:30 – 7	10 – 11
10k	5:45 – 6	9 – 9:30
12k	5 – 5:30	8 – 8:30

Interval Sessions: various locations in Welwyn Garden City, 6:45pm start

Approximately 25 mins of high intensity intervals over distances from 400m to a mile, with rest periods, in various locations in WGC. Runners of all abilities are welcome, pace is dictated by the runners themselves, slower runners will simply do fewer repetitions. Members will be notified of the locations and session format on email and Facebook.

Group Runs – Thursdays 6.30pm Campus West

There are usually three groups as follows:

5k social	A gentle-paced run that would suit those who are still new to running, like a slower pace, are returning from injury or a break from running
Introduction to speed session	A training session for those who are daunted by the track. A mixture of intervals, fartlek and speed sessions. Ideal for those trying to improve their 10k time
Steady Group	Steady group run

Track Intervals – Thursdays 8:00pm Gosling Track

Meet at the track for 15 minutes of warm up activities followed by approximately 30 minutes of track intervals. Sessions comprise laps or multiple laps of the track followed by rest periods. Runners of all abilities are welcome, runners will be formed into groups based on targeted pace.

A reminder to GCRs that there are now parking charges at Gosling Sports Park – this page has details of car parking charges:

<https://www.better.org.uk/leisure-centre/welwyn/gosling-sports-park/gosling-car-parking>

Circuit Training - Homerswood School

For those interested, former GCR member Steve Livingstone runs a very good one-hour circuit training session every **Monday at 6:30pm at Homerswood School**, Kirklands, WGC, AL8 7RF.

The cost is £5 (free for first timers). Five minutes warm up, 40 mins circuits, 15 mins stretching (great for runners). Bring a towel and some water.

Club Kit

Club kit is available from the Club Kit Secretary Richard Somerset.

We have vests, t-shirts, long sleeve tops and jackets in club colours and in all sizes. See club website for photos. Vests, t-shirts and long sleeve tops are £21, jackets are £42.

You can pay by cash or bank transfer. Please Facebook message or text Richard on 07790 591868 or email rich.somerset@ntlworld.com to arrange pick-up.

"Puffa" jackets are also available for £42, please contact Martha Hall on: ma-hall28@hotmail.com for availability and more details.

GCR Strava Group

If you'd like to join the GCR Strava community, follow this link: <https://www.strava.com/clubs/garden-city-runners>

Join Garden City Runners

Do you live in or near Welwyn Garden City? Like running? Garden City Runners is your local running club. It has over 350 members and encourages participation by all. The club has a varied training programme to suit everyone, from working up to 5 kilometres right through to full marathons. Try a few sessions before joining. Membership is only £20 per year and is available on the GCR website via the new Membermojo platform (note that it is no longer possible to join via the old application form). Simply log into <https://membermojo.co.uk/gcr> and follow the instructions. If you want to know more about the Garden City Runners please contact Michael Scutt (Secretary) or Sue Fletcher (Membership) at gcr@gardencityrunners.org.uk, visit our website <https://www.gardencityrunners.org.uk/> or our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/groups/gardencityrunners/

Please send reports of races and milestones, with photos if available, by **7pm Sunday** evening for (almost) guaranteed inclusion, to results@gardencityrunners.org.uk